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### Q&A: Cary O'Dell

The assistant to the Library's recording registry and film preservation boards writes books when he's not at work. His fifth will be published in June.

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Artists and performers whose work has been inducted into the recording registry include Joan Baez (clockwise from top left), Mel Brooks, Jennifer Higdon, Gloria Gaynor, Nile Rodgers, Don Schlitz and Harry Belafonte.

## The Long and Winding Road to National Recording Registry Listing

Months of careful work precede each edition of the recording registry.

BY WENDI A. MALONEY

Early next Wednesday morning, Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden will renew a springtime tradition: She will publicly induct 25 new titles into the National Recording Registry by way of a press announcement.

If things unfold as usual, stories and alerts will appear almost instantly about what will be, by design, a mix of iconic recordings and lesser known but important soundtracks from American life. For two decades now, the annual release has been among the most highly anticipated and heavily covered news from the Library.

Understandably, media outlets focus on the selections. But,

behind the scenes, enormous work goes into deciding on listings that, together, document the richness of the nation's audio history.

"We're dealing with such an ocean of material, the idea of all recorded sound, not just music, but all recorded sound, including radio broadcasts and speeches and spoken word recordings, news-casts and news coverage," Cary O'Dell of the National Audio-Visual Conservation Center (NAVCC) said of the works nominated to the registry.

Each year since it debuted in 2003, Library staff have shepherded an ever-growing list of titles through the selection process, culminating

REGISTRY, CONTINUED ON 5

# NOTICES

## DONATED TIME

The following employees have satisfied eligibility requirements to receive leave donations from other staff members. Contact Amy McAllister at [amcallister@loc.gov](mailto:amcallister@loc.gov).

Kelly Abell  
Lynette Brown

Avraham "Avi" Shapiro  
Michelle Dubert-Bellrichard

## HELP MAKE COPYRIGHT RECORDS ACCESSIBLE

The User Experience team in the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) is conducting a usability study of the new Copyright Public Records System (CPRS). Staff are invited to help OCIO and the Copyright Office improve the system to better meet users' needs. Consider spending 20 to 30 minutes exploring the system and share your insights. The study is available through April 11.

To learn more, [visit the CPRS study guide](#). To participate, [go to the study](#). Questions? Send an email message to Carlos Alvarado at [calvarado@loc.gov](mailto:calvarado@loc.gov).

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# GAZETTE

LIBRARY  
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### MISSION OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Library's central mission is to engage, inspire and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

### ABOUT THE GAZETTE

An official publication of the Library of Congress, The Gazette encourages Library managers and staff to submit articles and photographs of general interest. Submissions will be edited to convey the most necessary information.

Back issues of The Gazette in print are available in the Communications Office, LM 143. Electronic archived issues and a color PDF file of the current issue are available online at [loc.gov/staff/gazette](http://loc.gov/staff/gazette).

### GAZETTE WELCOMES LETTERS FROM STAFF

Staff members are invited to use the Gazette for lively and thoughtful debate relevant to Library issues. Letters must be signed by the author, whose place of work and telephone extension should be included so we can verify authorship. If a letter calls for management response, an explanation of a policy or actions or clarification of fact, we will ask for management response.—Ed.

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### GAZETTE DEADLINES

The deadline for editorial copy for the April 22 Gazette is Wednesday, April 13.

Email editorial copy and letters to the editor to [mhartsell@loc.gov](mailto:mhartsell@loc.gov) and [wmal@loc.gov](mailto:wmal@loc.gov).

To promote events through the Library's online calendar ([www.loc.gov/loc/events](http://www.loc.gov/loc/events)) and the Gazette Calendar, email event and contact information to [calendar@loc.gov](mailto:calendar@loc.gov) by 9 a.m. Monday of the week of publication.

Boxed announcements should be submitted electronically (text files) by 9 a.m. Monday the week of publication to [mhartsell@loc.gov](mailto:mhartsell@loc.gov) and [wmal@loc.gov](mailto:wmal@loc.gov).



# Library to Celebrate Harjo's Poet Laureateship

A reading, a dance party and a retreat will close Harjo's three terms.

The Library will honor Joy Harjo, the first Native American U.S. poet laureate, with two public programs at the end of April to mark the conclusion of her laureateship.

"For a remarkable three terms as U.S. poet laureate, Joy Harjo has tirelessly promoted Native poets and poetry," Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden said. "To her, poems are 'carriers of dreams, knowledge and wisdom,' and she has been an insightful voice during the difficulties of a pandemic. We are eager to welcome her back to the Library to celebrate her tenure as poet laureate."

At a closing event at 7 p.m. on April 28 in the Coolidge Auditorium, Harjo (an enrolled member of the Mvskoke Nation) will read and discuss her favorite ancestor poems. The evening will begin with a performance by singer-songwriter Jennifer Kreisberg (Tuscarora, North Carolina) and will include a reading by poet Portlyn Houghton-Harjo (Mvskoke, Seminole). Harjo will conclude the evening with a performance of her poem "Remember."

Tickets are free and [available here](#). The event will also be livestreamed on the Library's YouTube channel and Facebook page.

On April 29 at 7 p.m., the Library will host a dance party for Harjo in the Montpelier Room featuring DJ Tnyce (Haliwa-Saponi). It will showcase songs selected by Harjo as well as recordings of her own work. Tickets are free and [available here](#).

Concurrently, the Library will host the first retreat of [In-Na-Po – Indigenous Nations Poets](#), a new organization mentoring emerging Native writers founded by former Wisconsin poet laureate Kimberly

Blaeser (Anishinaabe, White Earth Nation). Harjo is an advisory board member of the organization.

From April 25 to 29, a cohort of 30 retreat fellows, faculty and guests will participate in workshops and discussions in the Jefferson Building. They will also visit the American Folklife Center (AFC), which developed a new digital collection of recordings for Harjo's "[Living Nations, Living Words](#)" signature laureate project, and see items from its collections as well as from collections around the Library.

Retreat faculty and guests include Luci Tapahonso (Diné), the first poet laureate of the Navajo Nation, and her successor, Laura Tohe (Diné); recent National Poetry Series winners Heid Erdrich (Turtle Mountain Ojibwe) and Jake Skeets (Diné); and other award-winning writers such as Deborah Miranda (Esselen and Chumash) and Elise Paschen (Osage).

"This has been an incredible moment to serve poetry and to celebrate the historic, ongoing contributions of the original peoples of these lands," Harjo said. "I'm thrilled to conclude my laureateship with In-Na-Po's inaugural retreat, which marks a fresh beginning for emerging genera-



Shawn Miller

Joy Harjo

tions of Native poets."

The AFC is co-sponsoring the In-Na-Po retreat as part of the Library's [Of the People: Widening the Path initiative](#), supported by an institutional grant from the Mellon Foundation. Of the People is multiyear effort to connect the Library more deeply with Black, Indigenous and other communities of color historically underrepresented in the United States and in the Library's collections.

More details about these events and Harjo's poet laureateship are [available here](#). ■

## A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



Robert K. Bindig Collection/American Folklife Center

The Veterans History Project has a vast collection of illustrated envelopes, particularly from World War II, [Justina Moloney writes on Folklife Today](#). During the pandemic, she created the StoryMap "The Art of Correspondence" focusing on envelope art, including that of Robert K. Bindig, whose work is shown here.

# Copyright Small Claims Website Goes Live

The U.S. Copyright Office launched [ccb.gov](http://ccb.gov) this week, a website serving as a gateway to the first copyright small-claims tribunal in the United States. The launch of [ccb.gov](http://ccb.gov) is a major milestone toward the full opening of the tribunal, titled the Copyright Claims Board (CCB), to creators and users of copyrighted materials later this spring.

In 2020, Congress passed the Copyright Alternative in Small-Claims Enforcement Act to establish the board and assist creators and users of copyright-protected works to more easily resolve their disputes. These creators and users can assert their claims before the board for a small fee without the need for an attorney and the significant costs and time delays resulting from the current federal court process. The board will be staffed by copyright experts and rely on streamlined, affordable procedures.

The website is the new online home of the CCB. Once the board starts hearing claims later this spring, [ccb.gov](http://ccb.gov) will become the location for filing and responding to claims, opting out of a proceeding, accessing the board's handbook and contacting the board with questions.

The new website features clear, helpful information about the board, including details potential claimants and respondents need to know about board proceedings. The website also hosts the CCB's Designated Service Agent Directory, the form for libraries and archives to preemptively opt out of board proceedings, and updates on the status of board-related rulemakings. ■

# Webinar Series Planned for Preservation Week

Preservation Week runs from April 24 to 30 this year. The annual nationwide observance promotes the role of libraries in preserving valuable collections – manuscripts, photographs, maps, film, audio recordings and more. The Library is participating by hosting the following webinars. All are welcome.

## Creating Knowledge from Fragments April 25, 11 a.m.

Fenella France, chief of the Preservation Research and Testing Division (PRTD), will discuss how PRTD staff have been using non-invasive portable instruments to learn more from the material and physical aspects of collections. Working with Marianna Stell in the Rare Book and Special Collections Division, PRTD has recently been exploring 12th- to 16th-century parchment fragments to expand understanding of historical parchment and inks. [Register here.](#)

## Preserving Daguerreotypes April 26, 11 a.m.

Daguerreotypes are among the earliest photographic records, and the Library holds over 800, including the iconic daguerreotype self-portrait of Robert Cornelius from 1839. Rachel Wetzel, senior photograph conservator, will discuss the development of the daguerreotype, introduce Cornelius' work and explain how her daguerreotype research led to a recent major acquisition. [Register here.](#)

## Introducing Preservation Digitization April 27, 11 a.m.

Aaron Chaletzky, head of the Reformatting Projects Section, will discuss the work of the Preservation Services Division, which performs a wide variety of reformatting, including of brittle books,



Shawn Miller

Photo conservator Rachel Wetzel holds a daguerreotype by Robert Cornelius.

foreign newspapers and tangible media. [Register here.](#)

## Moving Collections Off-Site April 28, 11 a.m.

Cathy Martyniak, chief of the Collection Management Division, will provide a top-level overview of issues to keep in mind if a library decides to move a portion of its collections to an off-site facility. [Register here.](#)

## Sustaining Preservation Programs April 29, 11 a.m.

Jacob Nadal, director for preservation at the Library, will describe how the Library's Preservation Directorate plans for and maintains its preservation programs. Combined, recent efforts help to make sure the directorate will be able to respond to changes in immediate requirements and across strategic planning cycles while advancing long-term and large-scale preservation needs. [Register here.](#) ■





Rachel Del Gaudio

## Cary O'Dell

*Cary O'Dell supports the National Recording Preservation Board and the National Film Preservation Board.*

### **Tell us about your background.**

Though I've lived on the East Coast now for over 20 years, I think I'm still kind of a Midwestern boy. I grew up in Illinois – Galesburg to be exact. I attended Southern Illinois University and graduated with bachelor's degrees in English and radio-TV. (That, by the way, was not great ambition but great indecisiveness.) Post-college, I was the archives director for the Museum of Broadcast Communications in Chicago. Then, I came east to work at the Library of American Broadcasting at the University of Maryland, among other places.

### **What do you do at the Library?**

I joined the Library in 2009. Since day one, I've assisted Steve Leggett in interacting with the Library's film and recording registry preservation boards and the annual announcements of the new entries that the Library makes every year. It's not only a great way to convey the importance and need for media preservation to the public, but it's very educational – even for those of us in the field.

### **What are some of your standout projects?**

Well, of course, every year the new selections for the National Recording Registry and the National Film Registry bring about a whole slate of titles to celebrate, research, write about and interview people about. By definition, no two years are ever alike.

Because of my strong TV background, I'm always flattered when, sometimes, I'm tapped for my expertise in that area. For example, I've worked with the David Susskind estate for over 30 years now – since long before I joined the Library – and I enjoy working with the archivists and engineers at the Packard Campus in furthering preservation of that collection. Susskind was a television and film producer and longtime talk-show host.

### **What do you enjoy doing outside work?**

Well, I watch way too much reality TV! But I also write. My newest book, my fifth, is coming out in June. It is about a real-life man named Johnny Bob Harrell and the controversial religious colony he founded in Louisville, Illinois, in the early 1960s. It's a fascinating story.

My previous book, which came out in 2020, was on the Buckminster Fuller dome home in Carbondale, Illinois. It's the only dome that "Bucky" ever lived in. It is now a historic site, and I serve on the board that is seeing to its ongoing restoration.

### **What is something your co-workers may not know about you?**

This is an oldie but a goodie: As far as the Internal Revenue Service is concerned, I'm a farmer! I inherited some farmland from my parents when they passed away. It is rented out every year to two brothers who farm it for me. About this time every year, circa April 15, I think it's more trouble than it's worth, but I won't sell it. It's a family legacy. ■

### **REGISTRY, CONTINUED FROM 1**

in a record 1,200-plus nominations for 2022.

The registry got off the ground in November 2000, when Congress passed legislation creating a 44-person National Recording Preservation Board (NRPB) to advise the Librarian of Congress on recorded sound preservation policy and annual selections to the registry.

The registry isn't meant to duplicate the Grammy Awards or serve as another "best of" list, former Librarian of Congress James Billington explained on Jan. 27, 2003, when he released the inaugural 50 titles. Instead, the registry aims to highlight America's unique audio legacy and encourage its preservation for future generations.

The combination of entries on that first listing reflects the registry's scope. It brought together titles as varied as Bing Crosby's "White Christmas"; Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech; Tito Puente's "Dance Mania" album; "Respect" by Aretha Franklin; "Rhapsody in Blue" by the Paul Whiteman Orchestra; "The Message" by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five; and Jesse Walter Fewkes' 1890 wax cylinder recordings of Passamaquoddy Indians – the oldest ethnographic field recordings known to survive anywhere.

"We're looking for material we consider to be important in terms of having an impact or reflecting a part of recorded sound heritage," Stephen Leggett said of the board's annual effort to identify titles. "We want not just the famous but also some of the lesser known and different types of genres."

Leggett is in the Library's liaison to the NRPB, and he works with the board and the Librarian's office to coordinate the selection process.

Throughout the year, NAVCC staff receive a steady stream of public nominations by way of the reg-

### **REGISTRY, CONTINUED ON 6**

# NATIONAL RECORDING REGISTRY

## REGISTRY, CONTINUED FROM 5

istry's website, email and regular mail. Already for the 2023 registry, NAVCC has received about 400 public nominations.

Recordings nominated must be at least 10 years old, and nominations must include a justification explaining a recording's cultural, historical or aesthetic significance. As long as a submission meets those requirements, people can nominate pretty much anything – and they do.

"Maybe it's their wedding song, maybe it's their personal empowerment anthem," O'Dell said. "Or it can be something they consider to be important – a '60s protest song or something that is very influential in the Broadway community."

The past few years, public nominations have increased considerably every year. For 2022, NAVCC received around 1,000 nominations from the public.

"The public nominations tend to be very popular, well-known songs of more recent vintage," O'Dell said.

But public nominations have also been responsible for some out-of-the-ordinary inductions. These include a 1935 recording of the now-extinct ivory-billed woodpecker; a 1972 recording of a no-longer-extant Lake Michigan foghorn; and a 1930 recording of the Modesto (California) High School band playing Beethoven's "Egmont Overture," Op. 84.

"A lot of musicians come out of high school bands," Leggett said when asked why the band's performance qualified. "So, it's kind of just to show different ways that people experience and perform music."

Before the NRPB meets in the fall each year, NAVCC staff divide members into study groups by genre: gospel, comedy, broadcast/spoken word, jazz, disco/dance, country/bluegrass, technology, classical/opera and so on.

The categories are not set in stone. "There's a lot of bleed-over with genres. Folk music

can bleed into country music, gospel can bleed into country music, rhythm and blues can bleed into pop," O'Dell said.

Staff assign each genre group the public nominations in its category, noting the top vote-getters. The groups meet individually to consider the nominations and add some of their own – in 2022, the board nominated about 200 recordings. Members are made up of leaders in the fields of music, recorded sound and audio preservation.

Board members tend to go "a bit deeper and wider" than the public in their suggestions, O'Dell said. "They will come back with the avant-garde material, the obscure opera that was nevertheless influential or was technically advanced or an artistic triumph that was too little discussed and not remembered."

The study groups present their pared-down lists at the NRPB's fall meeting, and the entire board votes on titles. Then, NAVCC staff meet internally and consult with the Library Collections and Services Group, narrowing the list further to about 40 titles to forward to Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden.

For each of those, staff create blurbs to provide Hayden with context. They also send her a complete list of all the nominations for the year – the public's as well as the board's – and a record of the board's votes.

Hayden's job is to select 25 titles. She usually picks them from the 40 identified, but sometimes

she goes back to the public list or the board's suggestions.

"Ultimately, it's the Librarian's choice," Leggett said.

Once she selects titles, NAVCC preserves all versions of recordings for which it has master copies. "Our philosophy is that all versions should be preserved," Leggett said, even though each registry listing corresponds to a single version of a recording.

"A lot of these have already been preserved," he added. "Certainly, some of the commercial things have already been preserved."

For those that haven't, the registry increases public awareness of the need for copyright holders and others to act.

"It's a whole-field kind of effort to make sure these get preserved," Leggett said. "The Library doesn't have the staff, time or money to do it alone."

This year's listing will bring the total number of entries on the registry to 600. But neither Leggett nor O'Dell are worried about running out of titles anytime soon.

Because recordings have to be at least 10 years old to be nominated, thousands of titles become newly eligible every year. And many prolific artists and bands – the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, for example – have only a single registry listing so far.

"I think we have a long way to go before we close up shop," O'Dell said.

[View all registry listing to date.](#) ■

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## SIGN UP FOR JEMNS ALERTS

Staff are encouraged to download the Joint Emergency Mass Notification System (JEMNS) mobile app on their personal devices and register to receive text alerts. For instructions and more information, go to the [JEMNS frequently asked questions document](#).

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